CAPTIVITY

OF

FATHER PETER MILET, S.J.

AMONG

THE ONEIDA INDIANS.

HIS OWN NARRATIVE, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK.
1888.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

FATHER PETER MILET'S CAPTIVITY AMONG THE ONEIDA INDIANS, 1689–1694.

The Jesuit missionaries Father Isaac Jogues and Brother René Goupil were captured by the Iroquois and brought as prisoners to the Mohawk, to die by savage hands at Gandawagué, near the present Auriesville. Father Bressani and Father Poncet were subsequently taken by the same fierce tribe and cruelly tortured, but were finally saved. The next of the missionaries to fall into the hands of the Iroquois was Father Peter Milet, who in the following letter, written in 1691, gives an account of what befel him from the time when he was lured out of Fort Frontenac by the Indians.

He was sent from France to Canada in 1667, and soon after his arrival was assigned to the mission at Onondaga, and repaired to his field of duty with Father Stephen de Carheil, guided by the great chief Garakonthié. At Onondaga he continued the labors of Father Julian Garnier, and soon obtained the Indian name of Teharonhiagannra. In 1671 he succeeded Father Bruyas at Oneida, and established the sodality of the Holy Family to increase the piety and fervor of the Christian converts. Soenrese, a noted chief, became one of his flock and aided him greatly by his zeal. Meanwhile English influence was exerted to excite the Iroquois to war with the French, and de la Barre, governor of Canada, raised a force to invade the territory of the Five Nations. As the missionaries would no longer be safe in the cantons, they were all recalled, and in July, 1684, Father Milet reached the French camp on Lake Ontario, after having been nearly seventeen years among the Indians. He was sent subsequently to the fort erected by the French at Niagara, and remained there as chaplain till the post was abandoned in September, 1688.

The Marquis de Denonville was ordered by the king to send some Iroquois prisoners to France to be put in the galleys. To obtain them, that governor not only resorted to stratagem, but employed the missionaries in his treacherous work in such

E99
.9-5
M53
1694
M243826

a manner as to expose them to the greatest danger, and almost destroy the influence they had acquired in their long and painful ministry. As part of his plan, Denonville asked that Father Milet should be sent to Fort Frontenac, a post near the present city of Kingston in Canada, to act as chaplain, instead of a Recollect Father, on the pretext that his great knowledge of the Indian languages and character would enable him to effect more good. He was there used, without any suspicion on his part, however, in entrapping some Indians, and the Iroquois, as we see by his letter, held him responsible.

In 1689, at the instigation of Leisler, the Five Nations of Iroquois raised the largest force they had ever put in the field, in order to attack Canada. They invested Fort Frontenac, and, as the letter tells, induced Father Milet and a surgeon to come from the fort to their camp to attend some sick people and made them prisoners.

The reader can follow in Father Milet's letter the narrative of what befel him.

Failing to capture Fort Frontenac, the Iroquois army descended the St. Lawrence, and made an unexpected attack on the village of Lachine, above Montreal, murdering most of the people and nearly destroying the place. The French retaliated by sending an expedition of Canadians and Indians which destroyed Schenectady. Then from New York and New England three expeditions as mentioned by Father Milet were sent to attack Canada by sea and land.

Amid all these stirring events the Jesuit missionary remained a prisoner at Oneida, although by his adoption as Otasseté, he became virtually one of the sachems of the nation. His influence was so great that the English used every exertion to put an end to his captivity, while the French were equally anxious to have him remain, so long as he was in no actual danger.

His history after the date of the letter will be seen in the appended documents.*

* For Father Milet, see the "Relations de la Nouvelle France," 1667 to 1672,

LETTER OF FATHER PETER MILET

TO SOME MISSIONARIES IN CANADA.

ONNEIST, OCTAVE OF ST. PETER AND PAUL, 1691.

REVEREND FATHERS:

You will be, I am sure, very glad to learn the way in which the Iroquois and especially the Oneidas have preserved my life from my capture at Fort Frontenac to this time. It will, I believe, console you and good people will bless God. I will say but a word of the manner in which I was captured with Surgeon St. Amand, whom I took with me at the request of the Onondagas, in order to bleed some of their warriors, as they said, the better to deceive us. They had given us to understand that their people had gone to Montreal to make proposals for peace. The surgeon was taken to the cabin of the patients whom he was to attend, and I to that of the sachems and chiefs, who were assembled there to discuss various subjects, on which they said they wished to consult me, and have me pray for a pretended dying man, but really to make me a prisoner. I was asked whether the officers and soldiers did not go out. I answered: No, and that I was sent to learn what they desired of me and the others. "You must pay then for all," they told me, and at once two of the strongest fellows who had been selected to arrest me, sprang on me, seized me by the arms, took away my breviary and everything else I had about me. Every one addressed reproaches of one kind or another for having always been very much opposed to the Iroquois, but Chief Manchot of Oneida told me to fear nothing, that the Christians of Oneida whom I had baptized would preserve my life. I needed this support, because the English, it is said, had tried me and already burnt me in effigy. The said chief commended me to the warriors who were carrying me off, not to let me be stripped and take me in my clothes to their tribe; but as soon as he left me to join 300 Iroquois of all tribes who were leaving their ambuscade to endeavor to give me some companions in misfortune, and to surprise the fort, if they could, I was demanded, and at the

---

those for 1673, and 1673-9; Charlevoix, "History of New France," iii.; "N. Y. Colonial Documents," iii., iv., ix.; "Collection de Manuscrits," i., ii., N. Y. Documentary History.

same time my girdle was taken off, another took my hat, a third took away my soutane, and a fourth my shirt. In fine others pulled off my stockings, and took away my shoes. They left me only my breeches, and even they were demanded by some men of importance, who said that they had dreamed, but my guard opposed these observers of bad dreams, and rescued me from the hands of those who wished to massacre me on the spot, and who incensed at the ill treatment they professed to have received from the French through my influence, had thrown me into the water and trampled me under foot.

The attempt of the Iroquois on Fort Frontenac having failed, because they did not succeed in capturing a Frenchman who contrived to get in and warn them of the ambuscade, I was untied from a sapling to which I had been bound, to await them on the banks of the lake, and I was put barehead into a canoe to take me in company with 3 or 400 Iroquois to an island two leagues below Fort Frontenac, where they awaited the main body of the Iroquois army of 1,400 men.

It was there that I was received with great shouts by the upper Iroquois,* who lined the whole shore to see me bound and brought as it were in triumph. Some rushed into the water to receive me as the canoe neared the shore, where they made me sing a song, as I did on the spot, and which they repeated and made me repeat several times for sport: Ongienda Kehasakchoua—I have been taken by my children. Ongienda Kehasakchoua—I have been taken by my children. To thank me for my song a Honnontouan (Seneca) struck me with his fist near my eye, leaving the mark of his nails, so that one would have thought it a stroke of a knife. After this I was taken to the cabins of the Oneidas, where they did not permit any other insult to be offered me, nor even let them compel me to sing again in the Iroquois style. Some individuals even sent for me and made me pray to God, and sing hymns of the Church, either alone or with other French prisoners, who were sometimes brought there, and who sang with me the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, etc.

Toward evening we dropped down eight leagues below the fort and spent two days there. It was at this place that a woman of Honnontouan (Seneca) whom I did not know, rendered me an important service, by giving me a kind of English cap, because I was bareheaded and often exposed to the rays of the sun, which had affected me greatly. This woman afterwards passing by this place made herself known to me. She is the mother of Andotien-

* Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas.

nons, a Christian at the Mountain.* God reward her for her charity which she rendered me so seasonably and with such a good grace.

From that place the army straggled to Otonniata,† where it remained three days. There a council of war was held. I was near passing the line and being immolated as a public victim. There were three Frenchmen prisoners with me, two whom Mr. de Valrenne had given to go with Onnonaragon to convey to Montreal the first information of the descent of the Iroquois, and who had fallen into the ambuscade laid for them two leagues from the fort, and the surgeon who was captured with me. The Onondagas who had taken up the war kettle at the instigation of the English had surrendered us to the four nations, and they had no one left to throw into that war kettle which was to rouse the courage of the warriors. The resolution was accordingly adopted to restore us to the disposition of the Onnontannes, so that they might themselves select the one best suited for their purpose, and the lot would probably have fallen on me, both because putting me to death would have been a mercy (? menace) of a war without peace, such as they seemed to desire, and because I was generally held up as a great Iroquois and English state criminal. One day at noon an Oneida chief came for me and took me bound as I was to the council of all the Iroquois nations assembled on a neighboring hill. I was placed beside the surgeon, whom I found in the posture of a prisoner of war as well as myself ; the two other prisoners were not there, because those who had the disposal of them were scattered hunting, and had taken them along. This is in my opinion what broke up the scheme, or what saved me that time from danger. "We are not all assembled," said a Goiogoen (Cayuga) sachem, and after looking at me for some time, he told me to pray to God. I asked him whether it was to prepare to die, and I was told No, and that I should only pray to God in my ordinary way. I accordingly rose and made a prayer in Iroquois, in order that all might understand it. I did not forget to pray in particular for all my hearers. When the prayer ended I was made to sit down on the ground : one of my arms was unbound, and I was soon after sent to the camp of the Oneidas. I had scarcely reached it before several of the leading men among them, came to express their joy that I had returned. They had been alarmed for me and told me,

* The Iroquois mission then on the Mountain near Montreal, and conducted by the priests of St. Sulpice, who subsequently removed it to the Lake of the Two Mountains, where it is still maintained.

† An island in the St. Lawrence.

that they had not taken part in the council held to put me into the hands of the Onondagas, that only the chief who had led me there, had done it of his own impulse, without consulting them, but that this should not occur again, and that I should be conducted to Onnei8t. In fact the next day they detached two chiefs with about 30 men to conduct me, while the army pursued its march towards Montreal.

On my journey I was pretty well treated in all the cabins of Oneida; they themselves prepared a mat for me, and if they had anything good to eat, they gave me my share among the first, but at night they never forgot to put the rope around my neck, feet, and hands, and around the body, for fear, they said, lest God should inspire me to escape, and they be deprived of the advantage and glory of conducting me to the nation, but I had no such thought, and preferred to die if God willed it, at Onnei8t, which was the place of my former mission rather than in any other place in the world. I was not loaded with anything during the march, except that towards the end of our journey, one of the two chiefs who had charge of me, gave me his bag, which was very light, to carry. At the last sleeping place, ten leagues from Onnei8t, I met a Christian woman named Mary, who in the name of her father and mother gave me a large rosary strung on tin, with a fine medal of the Holy Family. She told me to put it on my neck which I did. Happy meeting ! which filled my heart with consolation, and almost made the young braves who conducted me lose hope of being able to enjoy themselves seeing me burnt at their arrival, as it was the custom to do with the first prisoner brought in when they had determined on war; but they lost it almost entirely, when two leagues from the town we met another Christian woman of the first nobility at Onnei8t, who awaited me with her daughter, whom I had formerly baptized the same day as herself, and with her husband who was the second chief in whose charge I was, and who having left the army, on purpose to conduct me more safely had gone on two days ahead to notify his wife of my approach. They had all come there to meet me, with several little refreshments of that country, with which this Christian woman provided me abundantly and she asked me to whom of those who accompanied me, I wished to be given. Then she took the rope off my neck and unbound my arms. She gave me a white shirt and a blanket of fine stuff that belonged to her daughter. Would any one have believed that among savages there would be found such generous friendship and such deep gratitude for having received baptism as this ? It was the eve of St.

Lawrence's day and all the morning I had been preparing myself as well as I could for whatever might befal me, and to endure the fire, if need be, in imitation of that great Saint, but I confess that I could scarcely restrain my tears on beholding the charity and heart of these poor Indian Christians. Having recovered a little, I asked whether it was to adorn the victim and whether I was to die on my arrival. The good Christian woman told me that nothing had yet been settled, and the council of Oneida would decide in its own time.

A warrior had already lent me, at Otonniata, a little jacket, perfectly new, of which they did not wish to deprive me then, and the Christians having already given me new clothes, they made me continue my journey with the livery (totems) of the two most important families of Oneida, that of the Bear and that of the Tortoise.*

Messengers were at once sent to notify the sachems that I was near, in order that they should also come to meet me, and kindle a fire of awaiting within the town; they came, but they were not all in the same state of mind, as those of whom I have just spoken. One sachem, after saluting me in Indian fashion, three times tried to strike me in the face with his fist, but as my arms were free, I thrice parried the blow, almost without reflection, and when the Indian had desisted, they made me sit down near the sachems, and Chief Manchot, husband of the good Christian woman, who had chosen to conduct me thus far, harangued them and told them in the name of the other chiefs who followed the army, that I did not come as a prisoner, but as a missionary who returned to visit my flock; that it was their will that I should be taken to the council cabin and put at the disposal of the Agorianders,† or people who managed the affairs of the country, and not at the disposition of the soldiery or people, as he now placed me in their hands, and for himself he withdrew.

A sachem of the Bear family, a great friend of the English, then made a strong speech, declaring that I belonged to the side of the

---

* Each Iroqu is tribe was divided into gentes or families, the Bear, Tortoise, and Wolf, being the chief with some smaller ones. A man could not take a wife from his own gens, but from one of the others, and his children belonged to the gens of their mother. The father's name and rank descended to his brother or to the children of his sister.

† The Agoianders were a noble class, possessing great influence. Cartier evidently found it dominant at Quebec.

Governor of Canada, who was overthrowing the Cabin,* and who had completely burned the towns of the Tsonnon8a (Senecas).† He said so much that I feared that the fire which was there, was kindled to burn me before I entered the town, as they sometimes do, but his speech at the close grew milder, and he said that as the chiefs had recommended that I should be taken to the Council Cabin, which is a privileged cabin, I must be taken there. This commission was entrusted to a man of the nation called Skannehok8ie, from the country of the Mohegans, and naturalized among the Iroquois.

I passed that bad country under the guidance of this protector, who carefully kept aloof several drunkards who wished to insult me and stop me on the way. I was astonished to see the number of people who appeared on all sides, and in this company I was made to enter the Council Cabin, which had become a Cabin of war by the intrigues of the English and other enemies of the Faith.

It was the cabin of our good Christian woman, for she received me there with great welcome, but it was soon afterwards necessary to conceal me, drunken men and women coming from all sides to assail us and utter a thousand insults against those who protected me, hurling stones against the cabin and threatening to overthrow everything and to set it on fire. "Since war," said they, "is begun, we must not be deprived of the first fruits that come to us." The good Christian woman, Gouentagrandi, told me that she suffered great distress, when war was sung in her cabin, rather than in some other, in order to be able to save my life more easily or to preserve that of the Governor of Canada or any other Frenchman of rank, if they had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, and in fact she has not only preserved me, but she has also preserved several other French, both in her cabin and in others, and it may be said that if any good has been done or is now done in this mission, it is to this good woman after God that the first praise is due.

On two other days after the fury of the drunkards had passed, my friends wished to have my case decided, and my fate settled, before matters became more exasperated, in case any Iroquois were killed at Montreal where they had gone in war. I was taken to the place where the chiefs of the two families, the Tortoise and the

* The five Iroquois nations in their symbolical language formed a cabin, the Mohawks holding the door and the Onondagas the fire. They called themselves as a nation Hotinonsionni (French notation) or Hodenosausee (English notation) meaning "They form a cabin."

† This alludes to Denonville's invasion of the Seneca territory.

Bear, had assembled to decide on my lot. Both concluded that they must wait for the return of the warriors and know more particularly their intentions and those of the Onondagas before coming to any determination; that meanwhile the town should be assigned as my prison, and that I might visit what cabins I chose. I remained in this state about three weeks, where I had nothing to suffer except from the drunkards, who were importunate and made various threats. In the visits which I made I was generally called *Genherontatie* (The dead or dying man who walks), and those who returned from Orange, a little English town, brought no tidings favorable to me. But if on one hand I had these little crosses to suffer, our good Susan and the other Christians, following her example, were a great source of consolation to me, for not to speak of the care they took of my temporal well-being, they brought me children to baptize, they sent the sick or afflicted to me to comfort, adults came to confession, and to give me an account of the state of their consciences since my departure. People came to me to pray to God, and for other spiritual necessities even in the little lurking places, where they hid me for fear of the drunkards. The mat was prepared for me on Sundays and holidays, and when we were disturbed in the cabins, the mat was taken into the fields to pray God there more apart and in greater peace.

What consoled me also greatly was two crosses which I found planted on the graves of two Christians who had died after I left this mission. I shall speak only of one for the present. I had a good Christian who made open profession of Christianity, and who laying aside all human respect, sang in the chapel when I formerly dwelt here in the capacity of missionary. He did not in my absence forget the esteem with which God had inspired him for his faith, but persevered constantly in his good practices, and having fallen from the top of a tree to the ground, crushing his whole body, he suffered his pains for thirty days that he survived his fall with great patience as the Christians assured me. He made them frequently come together to pray to God for him, especially as death approached, and he ordered that after his death a cross should be set up on his grave to show that he wished to die a Christian, and that he did not recognize as true kindred any but those who became Christians like him. It was the custom of these poor orphaned Christians to assemble and pray in this way for each other, especially in sickness and the various accidents that befell them. Even those who were not Christians imitated them, and made little banquets to bring them together and have their children baptized, and find

through their prayers, some remedy either for body or mind; others sometimes expressed to me how much they had grieved for my absence, having no one with whom they could really console themselves, or who could heal their consciences, and who often found themselves shocked amid a perverse nation and in a strange disturbance of mind, when the enemies of the faith and of the French excited all to war. But let us come to the decision of my trial.

The Iroquois army which made the attack on (Lachine) having returned, it was found that three of this nation had remained there, among others a leading chief who got drunk and was killed in a cellar. He would not allow himself to be taken. This had irritated the Iroquois warriors, who not satisfied with the prisoners whom they had brought, demanded that I should be presented with the others, as being also a prisoner. Our Christians fearing that the warriors who love carnage and glory in killing men, might cut off one of my fingers or commit some other outrage on me, to open the way to my death, concealed me more carefully than ever, they made me sleep sometimes in one cabin, sometimes in another, and sometimes even in the fields, so that the warriors and drunkards could not find me. Above all others, my protectress combined prudence with her zeal to extricate me from the danger I was in. With this view she went to meet her relatives who were some of the most influential warriors in order to anticipate them. She told them how she had preserved me till that time, and that she was determined to continue to do so with all her might; that no ill treatment could be done to me that she would feel deeply herself, that she would not bring me forward till the sachems assembled to decide the fate of all the prisoners, and till I had been set at liberty. They replied that she had done well, and that so far as they cared she might adhere to her resolution.

At last the day came when our sentence was to be pronounced. We were four who ran a risk of being burned. We all appeared to be given or to be put in place of the Iroquois who had been killed by the French and then judged in a final tribunal. While they were examining our case I had time to hear the confessions of my comrades in misfortune and give them absolution. Two of them were burned: for my own part I could only commend myself to the Providence and the mercy of God. I was sent back to different Councils or from tribunal to tribunal, because, on the one hand, I passed among our Iroquois as a great criminal and great deceiver, who had caused their fellow-countrymen to be seized under pretext of a St. John's day festival, and on the other, I was protected by

our Christians, some of whom were the most notable in the country, and they could not put me to death without afflicting them.

Many, however, thought that I would never get off; the rosary had already been taken off my neck and my face had been painted red and black as a victim to the demon of war and Iroquois wrath; but the family to which all had been already referred having assembled again, where the most important women were allowed to attend, a friendly act was done me by giving me instead of a chief who had died long before of disease, instead of for one of those who had been killed in the attack on the French at a place called La Chine above Montreal, or who had been arrested as prisoners at Fort Frontenac and transported to France, who were reckoned as numbered with the dead. This chief was named Otasseté, which is an ancient name of the first founders of the Iroquois republic.* The one named Gannasatiron, who by this donation became sole master of my life, used it very obligingly, he consulted only the warriors of his family and asked advice only from the two Christians who protected me most, and who of course concurred at once with him in the assurance of life which he gave me by these words: "Satonnheton szaksi—My elder brother, you are resurrected." At the same time he had two of the leading sachems summoned to report it to them: these sachems made fine speeches and congratulations exhorting me to uphold the interests of their nation more than I had yet done. Some days after a banquet was given to the notables of the town. [The friend ?] of Father de Lamberville, named Garakontié, brother of the chief of the Onondaga nation, and brother of the famous Garakontié who first bore that name, was invited to the ceremony, where a new name was given to me as an authentic mark that the Oneidas had adopted me and naturalized me as an Iroquois. My rosary had also been restored to me, and to crown my little happiness Gannasatiron fearing that I might feel hunger in his cabin, where there was not much corn, put me in that of my protectress, who is of the same family, where I had already remained for three weeks, and where I had been so well defended, and where all the important councils are held. It is there that we celebrate the holidays and Sundays, and where a mat has been prepared for me, and a little grotto which is dedicated to Our Dying Lord, X^TO MORITURO.†

* Otasseté was one of the hereditary sachems of the Oneida nation. The title descends in the female line, and Susanna's adoption of Milet apparently enabled her to bestow the name, which made him actually a sachem.

† Everything in this letter indicates that when he wrote he had received nothing from Canada, and of course without vestments and chalice, could not say mass.

The English were not pleased with the decision of the Oneidas in my favor: they at first reproached my main protectors Tegahoiatiron and his wife who had gone to trade with them, and had given them a little note which an Iroquois had made me write with charcoal, in the presence and at the request of my protectress to buy some goods for him which he ordered of an English friend of his. The English displeased at their sparing my life and wishing to use this opportunity for my ruin, at once mounted their horses to go promptly and report to all the Iroquois nations that I had written very bad things. The Christian woman who knew how reluctantly I had consented to write the note, because I clearly foresaw that ill-minded heretics would make trouble out of it, asked to see the note and recognizing: "Is this," she said, "the bad things that have been written to you? It was I who made him write them there and I know that he mentions only such and such things in it. You must have a very badly formed mind to tell so many lies, to make all this long talk about a wretched note, of which I know the contents, and to slander in this way a poor unfortunate man." She shut their mouths that time and her husband added: "If you are at war with the French, fight them as much as you like, but do not bring false charges against a man who belongs to us, and whose business is very different from that of war."

This did not prevent the English from appealing from the decision of the Oneidas to the Iroquois of the Mohawk and Onondaga. These mounted men made several journeys about the matter, as well as for their great war project, but to no purpose. So far as I was concerned all their intrigues and their solicitations served only to teach them, that the Indians after having once given a person his life, it was not their custom to deprive him of it.

The English then having gained nothing by this journey, made other efforts to withdraw me from this place. One of their deputies came to me one day to compliment me in my little grotto in the name of the Commissary at Orange on the condition of my captivity, saying that he felt compassion for me, that he was making effectual plans to deliver me and have me sent back to Quebec; that he would give two Indians for me, &c. Thereupon I assured him that after the obligations I was under to the Oneidas I could not leave them. He interrupted his compliments to tell me that the English would not suffer me here: I replied that that was the affair of my brothers and of all the Oneidas, and that he must apply to them. He said he would do so. I was immediately summoned to attend the harangue of this envoy of the English general: he went out after me, and we

entered the place of assembly, he by one door and I by another. The place where he was to speak was the cabin of my brother Gannasatiron. He began by saying that three English Governors were holding a council of war at Orange, but that the Governor of New York especially invited them to come and meet them and form a new alliance with them. The deputies of all the Irroquois nations proceeded to Orange where great rejoicings were made over the great success which their arms had recently had at the place named La Chine. He again exhorted them to war by various presents. He told them further that he gave up Fort Frontenac to them, and that they could easily become masters of it as the garrison was dying of hunger, but as the Irroquois army did not reach it till after the French had abandoned it, they had not the glory of having driven them out. Much provisions was still found there, which showed that famine had not driven them from that post, but rather the difficulty of revictualling when necessary, had induced the Governor of Canada to recal his soldiers.

Beside this the English had formed the project of three armies; the first was to go by the way of the river of the Irroquois (Sorel), the second by the way of Lake Saint Sacrement (Lake George) and the third by sea to besiege Quebec, where the three armies were to unite.

But this grand project did not succeed in the way they had flattered themselves: the two land armies were broken up by a special Providence of God. The small pox stopped the first completely and also scattered the second in which there were 400 English who were compelled to march back by order of the Irroquois, who at least at that time might be said to be more masters of the English, than the English were of the Irroquois.

Of this second army nothing was left but a party which attacked the French at La Prairie de la Magdeleine. The Governor of New York put under arrest three or four of the principal English officers who had brought back their troops without having carried out the orders to wrest New France from us or sack it. From Quebec we learned of the wretched failure of their third army, and they did well to write to me about it and many other things, as but for this the English would have made the Irroquois believe them, by rehearsing their victories and prowess, but blessed be God that He has preserved Canada. May the danger they have escaped teach the people of the country wisdom in the future.

Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium—
O Deus misericors.

The Fish, that is the name of the Governor of Manath or New York, has earnestly exhorted the Irroquois not to listen to me, and especially to beware of my letters. His side must be weak indeed, if my pen can demolish it, but it must be that the Spirit of God is working, and I believe that it will be the sins of the English, rebels to their king, rather than my pen which will overthrow them. Here we see and hear of so many ill-devised plans emanating from the English, that the Irroquois seem much more reasonable than they are when they are not.

The Oneidas having adopted me for one called Otasseté, who in his lifetime was a member of the Council, and who was regarded from all antiquity as having been one of the mainstays of the nation, they oblige me sometimes to attend the Councils, if only to know what the matter is, to explain it to them, at least when they are important affairs that concern the country.

It annoys the English and those who uphold their interests to see me there, and they would much like to exclude me or deprive me of voting or being chosen to any position. The true Oneidas on the other hand and those who still support the cause of the Faith and their country, give me all the authority there that they can, and as the honor of God and the Church is often intermingled in public affairs of this kind, I am myself compelled to speak on many occasions which regard the service of God, because the Indians who depend on the English fôr their trade generally dare not say anything that can displease them, and I know hardly any one except our good Susanna Gouentagrandi who speaks to them boldly and who maintains thoroughly her rank of Agoianders for the faith and for the land of Oneida.

Gannasatiron, my brother, once spoke to them pretty boldly, for as they were always importunate and made several attempts to get me into their hands, sometimes with the sachems, and sometimes with him, because they always referred them to him, they asked him how it came that he alone was master of my person and not the sachems. "It is because I took him as my brother, and because I won him in war, and so far he belongs to me, as what you have in your house belongs to you. But to tell the truth I am no longer his master. He has become my elder brother and I have made the Christians his master, and as you will not find it easy to get much from them, I advise you to desist." Yet as they still pushed the matter, he said to the Commissary, K8iter (Schuyler), that he must give up all hope of carrying me off, and that he must say no more about it. The Commissary called me aside the next

day, and told me through an interpreter, that up to this time he had done all he could to release me from captivity, but that I had not supported him, and that I had paid no regard to all his efforts, any more than I had to the obliging offers made to me by the Minister at Orange.*

I replied that I was much obliged to him and to the Minister for their offers, but that I should have been still more so, if the offers and compliments had been followed by any good result, but that they had been only words in the air, which did not harmonize and really contradicted each other, without my being able to see anything solid or even a single word in writing on which I could rely or by which any kind of satisfaction was made for all that they had unjustly made me lose at Onondaga, which was a place in some sort privileged and devoted to the discussion of affairs of peace, especially concerning the Iroquois nations, that moreover, no matter what tempting offers at Orange might be made to me, I could never resolve to leave the Oneidas, to whom I was under too great obligation, which I could never acknowledge except by sacrificing myself in imitation of Jesus Christ for their temporal and eternal welfare.

Thereupon we parted and since that time the English have left me in comparative quiet, although I know that while here I am a great thorn in their side, but if I could also serve them before God for their conversion and for the public repose, I would do so with all my heart and I would forget all the wrong they have done me.

From all the foregoing your Reverences may judge how much I need the help of heaven and the prayers of good people. To induce you more earnestly not to withhold them, I will say a word more of the zeal of my protectress.

The Mohawks who being very near the English are strongly attached to them tried to carry me off on pretext of wishing me to come on Christmas day to hear the confessions of some Christians who are among them, but our good Christian Gouentegrandi who was not ignorant of their designs, told the messengers that any who were so anxious to pray to God and go to confession at Christmas could come themselves to Onnei8t, and that she saw through the trick of the English into whose hands they wished to deliver me.

Besides the wampum that the good woman has often given to speak in the councils, she has given several banquets to bring people together and to give greater solemnity to the festivals of Christ-

---

* Rev. Mr. Dellius.

mas, Epiphany, Easter, &c., to such an extent that in these banquets we have raised the standard of holy peace, and in case they do not wish to hear there of holy war, in the hope that Heaven will be on our side, and that those who obstinately refuse to hear the voice of God, who does not love the shedding of human blood, and who does not wish war unless it is holy, will sooner or later be punished, and on the other hand those who favor us will be rewarded. Yet we put all our little designs in the hands of God, and at the foot of the crucifix, seeking only the glory of His holy name, and the salvation with the quiet of the nations. I commend them once more to the holy sacrifices and prayers of your Reverences, of whom I am in heart and with respect,

My Reverend Fathers,

Your very humble and very obedient

Servant in Our Lord,

PETER MILET,

of the Society of Jesus.

I would have much more to write, but time does not permit. This with God's help will be for another occasion.